

# BATTLE OF MIDWAY

JUNE 4 - JUNE 7, 1942

With the attack on American forces at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the military forces of Japan started a campaign to establish dominance in the Pacific Ocean. As the Japanese continued to move east across the Pacific, Midway Island became a logical target. The Japanese strike force included two battleships, four aircraft carriers holding 240 aircraft, destroyers, cruisers, submarines, and auxiliary ships. Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was hopeful that a strike on Midway would lure the American Pacific Fleet into battle.

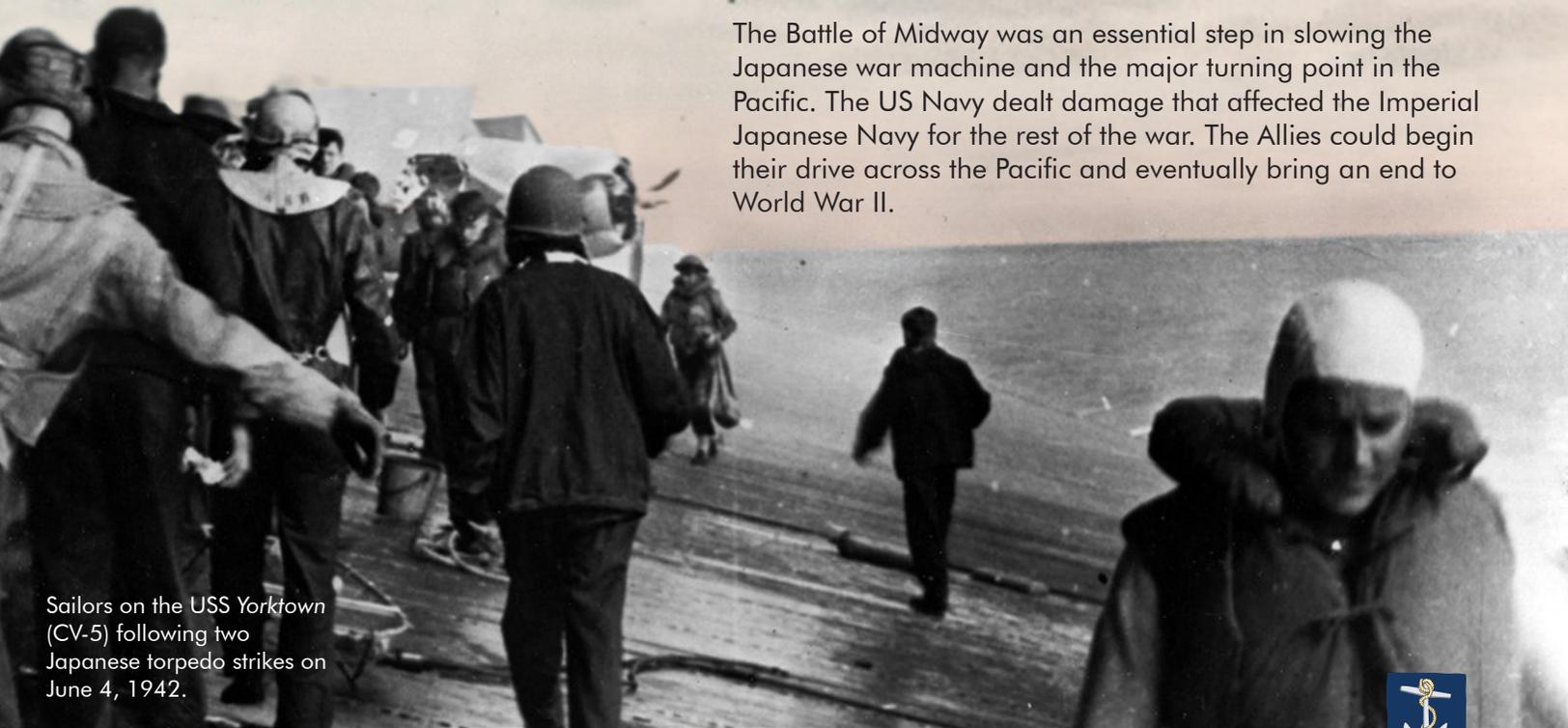
By mid-May 1942, U.S. Navy codebreakers at Station Hypo, Hawaii, deciphered the Japanese JN-25 coded message. This message told of a planned Japanese attack at Midway. The United States Navy sent three aircraft carriers, with over 230 aircraft, and fifteen submarines to meet the Japanese threat.



(Above) Japanese carrier *Hiryu* burning hours before sinking on June 5, 1942. (Left) USS *Hornet* (CV-8) at Midway June 8, 1942.

As the Japanese forces approached Midway, U.S. planes, from the air station on Midway and the nearby American carriers, started to search for incoming enemies. On June 4th, U.S. aircraft found the Japanese fleet and began a relentless assault. Meanwhile, Japanese aircraft continued their attack on American vessels. Before the end of the day, Japanese aircraft critically damaged USS *Yorktown* (CV-5). Torpedoed by Japanese submarine I-168 two days later, *Yorktown* sank early the next morning. Over the course of the battle, U.S. Navy bombers critically damaged, and forced the Japanese to scuttle, carriers *Hiryu*, *Soryu*, *Kaga*, and *Akagi*. From June 5 to 7, United States Navy forces continued to attack Japanese units. The Japanese naval assault on Midway was defeated at a high cost to both sides.

The Battle of Midway was an essential step in slowing the Japanese war machine and the major turning point in the Pacific. The US Navy dealt damage that affected the Imperial Japanese Navy for the rest of the war. The Allies could begin their drive across the Pacific and eventually bring an end to World War II.



Sailors on the USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) following two Japanese torpedo strikes on June 4, 1942.